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ABSTRACT

A study assessed parental satisfaction or concern with the identification, placement, and review process as developed and implemented by the Special Education Department of the Toronto Board of Education. Interviews were completed with 208 parents who participated in the process during January and February 1986. Fifty-eight percent of the parents belonged to non-Canadian cultural groups, including Portuguese, English, West Indian/African, and Chinese: the majority of their children were divided into six groups: elementary learning disability/reading clinic; elementary gifted; secondary (not gifted); physical handicaps, behavioral problems, and hearing problems; deferred; and not exceptional. In general, the parents interviewed evaluated the process very positively: they felt comfortable and relaxed in meetings which they felt were open, professional, and informative. Problems did exist in some areas, including lack or unavailability of materials in the parents' native language, poor parent preparation and inadequate information, the length of the process, parental alienation from information sharing and decision making before, during, and after the procedural meetings, and the structure and procedures of the committee. Analysis of placement by cultural group indicated that Canadian and West Indian/African parents had the highest percentages of children in the elementary learning disability/reading clinic programs and that Portuguese, West Indian/African and Chinese parents had the lowest percentage of children in the elementary gifted programs. Appendices include a special education guide for parents, a resource booklet for parents of children in the gifted program, a special education fact sheet, a flow chart of the identification/placement process, and the interview questions. (CB)

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IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS: PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' OPINIONS

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#179

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June, 1986

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INTRODUCTION

In the course of their school years, some children may require Special Education placement or support. The term "Special Education" covers a continuum of services designed for "exceptional children" as required by the Education Act, 1982. A child may have: difficulty in using language, a physical handicap, an emotional or behavioural problem, or intellectual or learning exceptionalities. Before a child is considered to be an "exceptional child" under the law, a decision must be made by a committee called an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.). This Committee has the powers and duties to:

(1) decide whether or not a child is exceptional;

(2) decide what kind of Special Education service, if any, is best suited to the exceptional needs of a child;

(3) decide whether more information is needed (e.g. of a psychiatric or medical nature);

(4) interview a child, if appropriate (but only with parental permission); and

(5) confirm its decisions with the parent, in writing.

The steps of the referral procedures, parents'/guardians' rights, the ways decisions are made, and the range of Special Education services for exceptional students offered by the Toronto Board of Education have been outlined in a booklet called "Special Education Guide for Parents and Guardians". The booklet is included as Appendix A for readers who are interested in more details. A similar booklet on Gifted Resource Centres was written in 1984 and is included as Appendix B. A TBE Fact Sheet describing Special Education programs is provided in Appendix C. And, the Toronto Board has provided principals with a fully detailed handbook on the Identification, Placement and Review process. The flow chart from this document describing procedures and responsibilities is given in Appendix D.

The Toronto Board of Education, at its meeting on November 14, 1985, adopted the following recommendation of the School Programs Committee, dated November 4, 1985:

> That the Director of Education be asked to report to the School Programs Committee, early in 1986, with an assessment of the level of parental satisfaction or concern with the Identification, Placement and Review process.

What follows is a report of this recommended assessment.

METHODS

Early in 1986, the School Superintendent, Special Education, and the Research Associate drafted a questionnaire for interviewing parents/guardians by telephone to assess their satisfaction or concern with the Identification, Placement and Review process. The draft questionnaire was reviewed and modified at a meeting of the Special Education Co-ordinators, reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent, Program and Curriculum, and finalized during February. A copy is provided in Appendix E.

A decision was then made to interview all parents/guardians of children who were considered for Special Education placement by Identification, Placement and Review Committees during the months of January and February of 1986. The School Superintendent, Special Education, requested that the decision sheets for all such children be collected from the Area I.P.R.C. Chairpersons and a letter, over the signature of the Assistant Superintendent, Program and Curriculum, was sent to the home address of all the parents/guardians informing them that they would be contacted for a telephone interview. (See Appendix F.)

A research technician was hired and trained and the interviewing (conducted mostly in the evenings) began in early March. Several parents could not be interviewed in English; accordingly, staff of Social Work Services were also trained to assist. The numbers of parents who required interviews in other languages were as follows:

Portuguese	14
Chinese	11
Greek	6
Spanish	5
Vietnamese	2
Italian	1
French	1
Polish	1

Interviewing was completed in early May, 1986.

THE SAMPLE

The sample was made up of parents/guardians of all secondary and elementary school pupils involved in the Area Identification, Placement and Review Committees held during the months of January and February in 1986; it did not include parents/guardians of pupils whose existing Special Education placements were reviewed during that time. The sample represents approximately 20% of all those involved in the process of first-time placement for the entire 1985-86 school year.

The total number of parents in the sample was 225; the total number interviewed was 208 or 92.4%. The distribution of the sample by administrative area was as follows:

AREA EAST	36%
AREA WEST	24%
AREA CENTRAL	21%
AREA NORTH	16%
METRO-WIDE	3%

The majority of the 208 pupils (77%) were placed in elementary Special Education programs and, as Table 1 indicates, these programs were most likely to be Learning Disability, Reading Clinic and Gifted. Of the remainder, 15% were placed in secondary (not Gifted) programs, 7% were deferred and 1% were assessed as not exceptional.

The 208 parents were asked at the end of the interview, "To what cultural group do you belong?" All but two parents responded. Table 2 shows that many cultural groups were named in addition to the 42% who identified themselves as "Canadian". For the purposes of statistical analysis, the sample was then divided into six cultural groups. Five groups - Canadian, Portuguese, English, West Indian/African and Chinese - each represented more than 5% of the sample. The sixth group included all others, each representing less than 5% of the sample. While statistical analyses were based on this division into six cultural groups, it is important to keep in mind that the division is not completely adequate and satisfying as (1) the actual numbers of parents/guardians in the Portuguese, English, West Indian/African and Chinese groups are quite small; (2) many cultural groups are represented by the sixth, or "other" group, and (3) those who identified themselves as Canadian are also probably from many cultural groups.

Table 3 indicates the cultural backgrounds of the parents according to the Special Education placement of their children. Using 33% (one-third) as a cut-off point, the five strongest trends are:

TABLE 1

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN WHICH PUPILS WERE PLACED

Programs	Percentage of Pupils (N = 208)
Elementary Learning Disability and Reading Clinic	37%
Elementary Gifted	26%
Secondary (not Gifted)	15%
Other Elementary: - Learning Centre - Behavioural - Special Program - Hearing - Physically Handicapped	14%
Deferred	7%
Not Exceptional/Not Placed	1%

TABLE 2

CULTURAL GROUPS TO WHICH PARENTS BELONG

Cultural Groups	Percentage of Parents (N = 208)
Canadian	42%
Portuguese	9%
English	8%
West Indian/African	6%
Chinese	6%
Other cultural groups *	29%
- American	- Korean
- Chilean	- Malaysian
- Dutch	- Maltese
- Filipino	- Polish
- French	- Russian
- French Canadian	- Scottish
- German	- Slavic
- Greek	- South American
- Hindi	- Spanish
- Hungarian	- Turkish
- Irish	- Ukrainian
- Italian	- Vietnamese
- Japanese	- Yugoslavian

* Fewer than 10 parents belong to each group.
For two parents, information was not provided.

TABLE 3

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM BY CULTURAL GROUP

(N = 208)

Programs	Canadian (N=88)	Portuguese (N=18)	English (N=16)	West Indian/ African (N=13)	Chinese (N=12)	Other Cultural Groups (N=61)
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic	45%	33%	25%	39%	25%	30%
Elementary Gifted	27%	11%	25%	15%	8%	36%
Secondary (not Gifted)	9%	33%	19%	-	25%	18%
Other Elementary	13%	17%	13%	31%	17%	11%
Deferred	6%	6%	12%	15%	17%	5%
Not Exceptional/ Not placed	-	-	6%	-	8%	-

(1) 45% of children of Canadian parents were placed in elementary Learning Disability and Reading Clinic programs;

(2) 33% of children of Portuguese parents were placed in elementary Learning Disability and Reading Clinic programs;

(3) 33% of children of Portuguese parents were placed in secondary programs (not Gifted);

(4) 39% of children of West Indian/African parents were placed in elementary Learning Disability and Reading Clinic programs; and,

(5) 36% of children of "other" cultural groups were placed in elementary Gifted programs.

RESULTS

Attendance at I.P.R.C. Meetings

One-third (33.7%) of the 208 parents/guardians interviewed did not attend the I.P.R.C. meetings held in January and February. Their reasons for not being able to do so are given in Table 4. For most, it was a case of the time of the meeting conflicting with the time they had to be at work. Among the remaining reasons, sickness was most frequently reported. One Canadian parent whose child had been placed in a Gifted program made the following comments about parents attending I.P.R.C. meetings:

> Parents need to be at the I.P.R.C. meetings. The process should not take place by relying on an exchange of papers. There are many variables involved in the assessment, and it is much better if parents are there personally.

A West Indian parent whose child's placement had been deferred for consideration at another meeting expressed these concerns:

> I was unable to attend the I.P.R.C. meeting because I had to work. I feel that the Committee now thinks I don't care about my child. They wrote me a letter about the results; it would have been nicer to get a telephone call.

The percentages of parents/guardians who did not attend varied widely by Special Education program. Parents with children placed in elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic programs were least likely to attend, while those with children placed in elementary Gifted programs were most likely to attend. The percentages of parents who did not attend analyzed according to program, are as follows:

Elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic (N=76)	45%
Other elementary (N=29)	38%
Deferred (N=15)	33%
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	26%
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	20%

The percentages of parents/guardians who did not attend varied even more widely by cultural group. English parents were most likely to attend while West Indian/African parents were least likely. The statistics are:

West Indian/African (N=13)	77%
Chinese (N=12)	50%
Other cultural groups (N=61)	39%
Portuguese (N=18)	33%
Canadian (N=88)	26%
English (N=16)	6%

(The reader should keep in mind while considering these percentages that some groups are very small.)

TABLE 4

REASONS PARENTS DID NOT ATTEND THE I.P.R.C. MEETING

Reasons	Percentage of Parents (N = 70) *
Had to work	63%
Sickness/In hospital	23%
No baby-sitter	7%
Did not know about/remember meeting	7%
Poor time	3%
Language problems	3%
Felt uncomfortable	1%
Business reasons	1%
Principal said it was not necessary	1%
Many reasons	1%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since a few parents gave more than one reason.

Feelings at the I.P.R.C. Meetings

The 138 parents/guardians who attended were asked "How did you feel at the I.P.R.C. meeting?" Responses were then divided into (for lack of better terminology) "positive feelings" and "negative feelings" as shown in Table 5.

Positive feelings were much more the norm than negative ones. Of the total 250 feelings expressed, 84% were positive, with the largest proportion of parents reporting they felt "comfortable" and/or "relaxed". One Portuguese parent whose child was placed in a secondary Resource Room told the interviewer:

> I felt good about how everything was organized and done.

A Japanese parent whose child was placed in a Gifted program expressed these positive feelings:

> I felt just great! I didn't know the Toronto Board met with parents to discuss their children.

And, a Canadian parent whose child was placed in a Learning Disability program said:

> I felt excellent and comfortable. The group from the school was a large, supportive one.

However, a French-speaking Vietnamese parent whose child had been placed in a Gifted program said:

> I felt rushed, confused and left-out. A lot of time was spent with the Anglophone parents, but I was called in for only a minute. I felt "outside" the I.P.R.C. meeting and school process.

A Canadian parent whose child had also been placed in a Gifted program made these suggestions for improving the meeting:

> The meeting could be made less intimidating by holding it in a smaller room with a round table. There could be less formality in the organization of the meeting, and things could be explained in "down-to-earth" terms.

More than one parent made the interesting observation that if they had not been involved with education and the Toronto Board of Education, they would have found the meeting intimidating and confusing.

TABLE 5

PARENTS' FEELINGS AT THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Feelings	Percentage of Parents (N = 138) *
Positive Feelings	
Comfortable	78%
Relaxed	33%
Familiar with I.P.R.C. process/previous experience	9%
Fine/good/fair/okay	7%
Respected	4%
Not rushed	3%
Involved	2%
Knew people at meeting	2%
Welcome/warm	2%
Not intimidated	2%
Not ignored	2%
Confident	2%
Positive	2%
Not upset	1%
Friendly/Everyone knew child	1%
Excellent	1%
Group from school very supportive	1%
Glad that TBE meets with parents	1%
Low key/reduced nervousness	1%
Easy to participate	1%
Impressed with way they talked about child	1%
Negative Feelings	
Rushed	4%
Intimidated	3%
Upset	3%
Nervous	3%
Ignored	2%
Not comfortable	2%
Tense	2%
Confused	1%
Felt like a token parent	1%
Belittled	1%
Was fighting a losing battle	1%
Was being humoured	1%
Committee was condescending	1%
Upset at first by number of people	1%
An "experience"	1%

(Continued)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

PARENTS' FEELINGS AT THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Feelings	Percentage of Parents (N = 138) *
Negative Feelings (Continued)	
Suspenseful	1%
Apprehensive	1%
Not sure what it was about	1%
Left out; more time given to other parents	1%
Didn't know what to expect	1%
Cut off	1%
Worried	1%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since many parents expressed more than one feeling.

Many parents/guardians expressed more than one feeling; the average number of positive feelings per parent was 1.51 and the average number of negative feelings was 0.29. When the average number of positive and negative responses are calculated by Special Education program, the data indicate that differences exist. It seems that parents of children whose placements were deferred or whose children were placed in secondary (not Gifted) programs felt least positive, while parents of children placed in "other" elementary programs and elementary Gifted programs felt most positive. The averages are as follows:

	Average Positive Feelings	Average Negative Feelings
Other elementary programs (N=18)	1.67	0.17
Elementary Gifted (N=44)	1.61	0.30
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=42)	1.50	0.29
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=23)	1.48	0.39
Deferred (N=10)	1.10	0.40

There are wider differences when the averages are calculated by cultural group. As the following data show, English parents expressed more positive feelings and fewer negative feelings about the I.P.R.C. meetings than did the other groups.

	Average Positive Feelings	Average Negative Feelings
English (N=15)	2.07	0.07
Other cultural groups (N=37)	1.51	0.24
Canadian (N=65)	1.49	0.40
Portuguese (N=12)	1.33	0.17

(So few Chinese and West Indian/African parents attended the meetings that data for them have not been included.)

Discussions at the I.P.R.C. Meetings

Those who attended were asked, "How would you describe the discussion at the I.P.R.C. meeting?" Table 6 provides the 505 responses divided into positive and negative descriptions. These 138 parents/guardians obviously have few complaints about the I.P.R.C. discussions, as 87% of the opinions can be classified as positive. The descriptors most frequently used were "open", "clear-cut", "professional", "impressive", "informative" and "interactive". For example, one Canadian parent whose child's placement was deferred said:

> The discussion was very professional. They gave me all the time I wanted, and they had all done their homework. My child's case was well put forward. It was a fair discussion.

TABLE 6

PARENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DISCUSSIONS
AT THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Descriptions	Percentage of Parents (N = 138) *
Positive Descriptions	
Open	70%
Clear-cut	58%
Professional/Impressive	57%
Informative/Questions well answered/Lots of feedback/Learned a lot	41%
Interactive	34%
Satisfying	9%
Straightforward/Organized/Well prepared	5%
Not tense	4%
Frank/Brief	4%
Quick	4%
Helpful/Useful attitudes	4%
Fair/Okay	4%
Appropriate/Realistic	3%
Supportive/Interested	3%
Personal/Empathetic/Caring	3%
Not confusing	2%
All very understanding	2%
Knew a lot about child already	2%
Not too academic/Not technical	2%
Objective	2%
Teacher explained child's work	2%
Flexible	1%
Committee included child	1%
Knew placement had to take place	1%
Negative Descriptions	
Confusing/Not clear-cut/Did not understand	9%
Not much discussion/One-way/Cut-off/Committee did not listen to parent	9%
Felt as if committee had made up minds before meeting/Didn't matter if parent present	5%
Annoyed that committee members spoke with such authority and did not know child	4%
Professional conversation that excluded parent/ Technical/Jargon	4%

(Continued)

TABLE 6 (Continued)

PARENTS' DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DISCUSSIONS
AT THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Descriptions	Percentage of Parents (N = 138) *
Negative Descriptions (Continued)	
Not informative/Wondered if non-verbal communication going on	3%
Casual converstion/Very informal	2%
Too many people/A lot of people	2%
Got off topic	2%
The teacher's assessment carried too much weight	2%
No interpreter	2%
Child was not tested by board/Inadequate testing	2%
Focussed on child's behaviour too much	2%
Poor	1%
Tense	1%
Didn't consider child	1%
Insensitive committee; laughed at parent's comment	1%
Nothing resolved	1%
Members varied in opinion	1%
Didn't discuss where the program takes place	1%
Not sure	2%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since many parents gave more than one description.

Another Canadian parent whose child was placed in a Gifted program described the discussion as follows:

> The discussion was very easy going, comfortable and informal. They went over my child's background. They weren't pushy. I liked the attitudes of the people present.

However, a few complaints did surface. For example, some parents expressed uncertainty about what Special Education programs are all about and consequently felt the discussions could have been more informative. In the words of one Canadian parent whose child was placed in a Learning Centre:

> There should have been more discussion about what a Learning Centre is and what the Special Education programs offer. I am not quite sure what it is all about. I would like to sit in on the class to determine if I am really satisfied.

Other parents spoke of "one-way", "technical" discussions that excluded them. The following are comments from two parents, one Canadian and one West Indian, whose children were both placed in full-time Learning Disability programs:

> The professional people talked "jargon". If the teacher, principal and social worker had not been there, I would have been intimidated and not known what was going on.

> They were saying weird things about my child. Psychological things were going on. It didn't include me; I was just there. They didn't ask how the child is at home. I had to talk to someone later to get out my frustration about the meeting.

The parents averaged 3.18 positive responses and 0.46 negative responses each. When the average number of positive and negative responses are analyzed according to Special Education program and cultural group, the widest differences appear among the cultural groups. English parents averaged the most positive descriptions while Portuguese parents averaged the least. English parents also averaged the least negative descriptions. The calculations are as follows:

	Average Positive Descriptions	Average Negative Descriptions
English (N=15)	4.20	0.27
Canadian (N=65)	3.58	0.58
Other cultural groups (N=37)	3.11	0.27
Portuguese (N=12)	1.08	0.42

(So few Chinese and West Indian/African parents attended the meetings that data for them have not been included.)

The calculations by Special Education program are given below and indicate that parents of children placed in secondary (not Gifted) and "other" elementary programs are most positive, while those with children whose placements were deferred were considerably less positive about the I.P.R.C. discussions.

	Average Positive Descriptions	Average Negative Descriptions
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=23)	3.43	0.35
Other elementary programs (N=18)	3.33	0.39
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=42)	3.29	0.57
Elementary Gifted (N=44)	3.14	0.50
Deferred (N=10)	2.40	0.30

Results of I.P.R.C. Meetings

All parents/guardians (N=208) were asked, "How do you feel about the results of the I.P.R.C. meeting?" A total of 344 feelings were expressed, as shown in Table 7, the majority (72%) of which were positive. The lists of positive and negative feelings about the results are both varied and lengthy. The two most frequently expressed positive feelings were "satisfied" and "happy". Here are the words of one Polish and one Canadian parent, both of whom had children placed in full-time Learning Disability classes:

> I agree with the results. I have had four children in Special Education programs, and they have all benefitted. I am very satisfied and have no complaints.

> I am extremely relieved that my son was accepted into the program and that such programs exist. I am very satisfied with the results. I am very impressed with the way everything was handled. Please convey my gratitude to the Special Education Department.

Sometimes parents/guardians did not know what the results of the meeting were or did not understand them. For example, a Chinese parent whose child was placed in a Gifted program had this to say:

> I received a letter after the I.P.R.C. meeting, but I did not understand what it was about. I still have no idea what the result of the I.P.R.C. meeting was.

TABLE 7

PARENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT THE RESULTS
OF THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Feelings	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Positive Feelings	
Satisfied	61%
Happy/Happy child in program	27%
Pleased	7%
Got what was wanted/expected/hoped for	4%
Did what they could for child	3%
Relieved	2%
Agree with results	2%
Impressed	2%
Positive	2%
Pleased that school is so involved with child	2%
Okay	2%
Pleased that committee willing to listen to parent	2%
Child qualifies for program	2%
Excited	1%
Proud	1%
No reservations about results	1%
Realistic	1%
Taxpayers' dollars being spent wisely	1%
Enlightening	1%
Victorious	1%
References made to child were positive and mature	1%
Glad to know where child is being bussed	1%
Glad child was placed immediately	1%
Pleased to get updates on child's work	1%
Satisfied if child can learn in program	1%
Constructive	1%
Satisfied if child can leave program later	1%
Satisfied; child is in program on a trial basis	1%
Pleased to find out it was a gifted program	1%
Satisfied even though deferred	1%
Case was well put forward	1%
Hope child will do more on computer now	1%
Decision was warranted	1%
Was in gifted program in another region; pleased to be in again	1%
Negative Feelings	
Concerned about waiting to get child in program	8%
Concerned about travelling to another school	4%
Has not seen any results/no idea	4%
Not satisfied	3%
Concerned	3%

(Continued)

TABLE 7 (Continued)

PARENTS' FEELINGS ABOUT THE RESULTS
OF THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Feelings	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Negative Feelings (Continued)	
Angry	2%
Confused	2%
Disappointed	2%
Not happy	2%
Waiting for next I.P.R.C. meeting	2%
Child deferred; mixed feelings	2%
Psychologist's report carried a lot of weight	2%
Program will label child	2%
Results are false, harmful and dangerous	2%
No other choice	2%
Preferred full-time to half-time program	2%
Racially discriminated against	1%
Committee knows more than parent	1%
Would rather have child interact more with other children	1%
Questions the methods	1%
A lot of irresponsibility involved	1%
Psychologist's report contains false information	1%
Parent was falsely quoted	1%
Child dislikes program	1%
Meeting was just a formality	1%
Wants to know more about program	1%
Decision should have been less drastic	1%
Child should not be in behavioural program	1%
Child lost form; has not been back to class	1%
Grade 2 child is being given Kindergarten books	1%
Child is not ready for program	1%
Not a positive experience	1%
Not keen on how it was handled; ready to say "forget it"	1%
Committee did not know child	1%
Should have been more testing	1%
Wrong program; child needs help with speech	1%
What happens now? Is placement dependent on money or child's progress?	1%
Need more follow-up	1%
Did not consider child's hypersensitivity to environment/chemical dust	1%
Committee said that chemicals are not their mandate; misplaced child	1%
No response to three letters to appeal decision	1%
What type of class will child be in?	1%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since many parents expressed more than one feeling.

A West Indian parent whose child was placed in a Learning Centre seemed very uninformed:

> I did not know anything about the meeting. I haven't seen anything. I don't know the results of the meeting or anything about the process.

And, a Ukrainian parent whose child was placed in a Gifted program wondered about the process that led to the results:

> I don't know what is happening. It seems that children are getting into the program as a result of parental pressures. Not all children should be in these special classes.

At the top of the list of negative feelings about the results were "concern about waiting to get a child into a program" and "concern about travelling to another school".

The parents/guardians averaged 1.19 positive and 0.47 negative feelings about the results each. When these averages are recalculated by Special Education program and cultural group, the widest differences are seen to be associated with program. Parents with children placed in elementary Gifted programs are most positive about the results, while those with children who were placed in "other" elementary programs or were deferred are least positive. The figures are:

	Average Positive Feelings	Average Negative Feelings
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	1.36	0.27
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	1.29	0.43
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	1.13	0.29
Other elementary programs (N=29)	1.00	0.76
Deferred (N=15)	0.53	1.20

By cultural group, West Indian/African parents expressed the highest average of negative feelings about the results of the I.P.R.C. meetings, while English parents and parents of "other" cultural groups expressed the highest average of positive feelings. The averages are:

	Average Positive Feelings	Average Negative Feelings
Other cultural groups (N=61)	1.34	0.36
English (N=16)	1.31	0.25
Canadian (N=88)	1.19	0.62
West Indian/African (N=13)	1.00	0.77
Portuguese (N=18)	0.88	0.33
Chinese (N=12)	0.75	0.33

Preparation Before the I.P.R.C. Meetings

The question, "How were you prepared before the I.P.R.C. meeting?" resulted in 586 responses, 80% of which could be considered positive. (See Table 8.) Many said they were "fully informed", "understood the purpose of the meeting", "were involved with information-sharing", "were fully consulted", and/or "were involved with decision-making". The remaining 20% of the responses that were negative were quite varied, but feelings of "not being fully informed", "not being involved in decision-making", "being inadequately prepared", and "having to prepare self" were most frequently mentioned.

The following are examples of the positive responses:

Greek parent whose child was placed in a Learning Disability class:

> I was fully informed and understood the purpose of the meeting. The Social Worker explained the purpose and process.

English parent whose child was placed in a secondary Resource Room:

> I was fully informed, consulted and involved. The psychoeducational consultant visited me and explained everything.

Canadian parent whose child was placed in a Reading Clinic:

> I was well prepared before the meeting. I am still in touch and get continuous updates. I think they are doing a fine job in the best interests of my child.

The following are examples of the negative responses:

Spanish parent whose child's placement was deferred:

> We feel the preparation was inadequate. If we had fully understood the importance of the meeting, one of us would have made every possible effort to attend.

A parent with a child placed in a Gifted program:

> We did not receive any information before the meeting. We had to pursue it ourselves. We want written feedback on the goals and what is happening in the program. We don't want to get all our information from our child.

A Canadian parent with a child placed in a secondary Resource Room program:

TABLE 8

HOW WELL PARENTS WERE PREPARED BEFORE THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

How Prepared	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Positive Responses	
Fully informed	51%
Understood purpose of meeting	45%
Involved in information-sharing	43%
Fully consulted	33%
Involved in decision-making	32%
Spoke to teachers/consultant/principal/social worker	6%
Second meeting; knew what to expect	6%
Adequate information/Briefed before meeting	2%
Understood when meeting was being held	2%
Not confused	2%
Not intimidated	2%
Child has previously been in Special Education	2%
Has continuous update	1%
Meeting was more comprehensive than expected	1%
Already involved with school	1%
Negative Responses	
Not fully informed	13%
Not involved in decision-making	7%
Inadequate preparation	7%
Had to take the initiative/push for information/ prepare self	6%
Not fully consulted	4%
Not involved with information-sharing	3%
Confused	3%
Gave short notice for meeting/informal notice	3%
Did not know what to expect	2%
Did not understand purpose/process of meeting	2%
Did not know about the meeting	2%
Had outside assessment done	1%
Did not know who was going to be at the meeting/ who to take	1%
Wanted child in last year	1%
Nervous before meeting	1%

(Continued)

TABLE 8 (Continued)

HOW WELL PARENTS WERE PREPARED BEFORE
THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

How Prepared	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Negative Responses (Continued)	
Inconvenienced	.5%
Annoyed about delayed process	.5%
Term of Special Education unclear	.5%
Others uncaring	.5%
Surprised child was being considered for program	.5%
Information was lost when child was taking it home	.5%
Didn't understand I.P.R.C. letter	.5%
Did not receive information in own language	.5%
Got help from a friend in Special Education	.5%
Could have become more involved	1%
Not sure/No response	2%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since many parents gave more than one response.

> I was inexperienced and not well prepared
> There should be a prepping before the meeting
> so parents know how to handle it if the child
> is not accepted to the program and so they
> know what to do if the child is accepted.

A Canadian parent with a child placed in a Gifted program:

> It seemed to be a mystery for a long time. I
> was basically uninformed.

An Italian parent with a child placed in a Gifted program:

> It is important that the principal sit down
> with the parent before the meeting and
> discuss the teacher's report. It is also
> important to make it clear to the parent that
> the Committee determines the exceptionality
> and the outcome.

The parents/guardians gave an average of 2.24 positive responses and 0.58 negative responses to this question. The averages by cultural group vary considerably. English parents averaged 3.13 positive responses while Portuguese parents averaged 0.83. West Indian/African parents averaged 0.69 negative responses while English parents averaged 0.38. The range of averages by cultural group are as follows:

	Average Positive Responses	Average Negative Responses
English (N=16)	3.13	0.38
Canadian (N=88)	2.68	0.66
West Indian/African (N=13)	2.15	0.69
Other cultural groups (N=61)	2.11	0.54
Chinese (N=12)	0.92	0.58
Portuguese (N=18)	0.83	0.61

The differences in averages by Special Education program are much less dramatic, as shown below, with parents of children placed in elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic programs providing the highest average of positive responses and the lowest average of negative responses.

	Average Positive Responses	Average Negative Responses
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	2.72	0.49
Other elementary programs (N=24)	2.14	0.66
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	2.07	0.69
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	1.90	0.68
Deferred (N=15)	1.60	0.53

The Location of the I.P.R.C. Meetings

Table 9 shows the opinions of the parents about the location of the I.P.R.C. meetings. Few complaints surfaced. Several mentioned that it is good and non-threatening to have the meetings in the local school.

Language of Written Information

Parents were asked, "Have you received written information in a language you can read?" Most (92%) said "Yes". Those who said "No" were (in order of highest to lowest frequency): Chinese, French, Portuguese, Greek and Italian.

Papers That Were Signed

Most (91%) of the parents said they understood the papers they had signed. Those who did not were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Canadian, French, Portuguese, Italian and West Indian.

Interpreters at the Meetings

Nearly every parent (94%) knew they could have an interpreter at the I.P.R.C. meeting. Those who did not were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Portuguese, English, French and Vietnamese.

The Booklet Called "Special Education Guide for Parents and Guardians"

This booklet is shown in Appendix A. When parents were asked if they had received it in a language they could read, 50% said "No", and 4% said they could not remember. In most cases, it was simply a matter of not receiving the booklet at all; receiving it in an inappropriate language was not so often the case. By cultural group, percentages of parents who <u>did not receive</u> the booklet were:

	Percentage
West Indian/African (N=13)	92%
Chinese (N=12)	83%
Portuguese (N=18)	67%
English (N=16)	56%
Other cultural groups (N=61)	49%
Canadian (N=88)	47%

TABLE 9

PARENTS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE LOCATION
OF THE I.P.R.C. MEETINGS

Opinions	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
<u>Positive Opinions</u>	
Okay	61%
Convenient	21%
In the school (good, not threatening)	13%
Excellent	4%
<u>Negative Opinions</u>	
Too far away	4%
Hard to find	2%
Inconvenient	2%
Don't Know/No Response/Not Applicable	10%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since some parents gave more than one opinion.

By Special Education program, percentages of parents who did not receive the booklet were:

	Percentage
Other elementary programs (N=29)	79%
Deferred (N=15)	73%
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	65%
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	54%
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	31%

A Canadian parent with a child placed in a secondary Resource Room program made these remarks about the booklet:

> When I finally got the booklet, I then understood what everything was about and what was happening. I found it very frustrating at first. Now it is okay, and I am satisfied.

Assistance at the I.P.R.C. Meetings

To the question, "Did you know you could bring anyone of your choice to the I.P.R.C. meeting to assist you?", 56% of the parents said "No".

By cultural group, the percentages who said "No" are:

	Percentage
Chinese (N=12)	75%
West Indian/African (N=13)	69%
English (N=16)	69%
Canadian (N=88)	59%
Other cultural groups (N=61)	48%
Portuguese (N=18)	39%

By Special Education program, the percentages who said "No" are:

	Percentage
Deferred (N=15)	87%
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	61%
Other elementary programs (N=29)	59%
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	56%
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	47%

Two Canadian parents, both with a child placed in secondary Resource Room programs and both aware they could have someone assist them, felt confused about what to do about it:

> They told me I could bring a professional to assist me. It made me feel as if I had to go out and find one.
>
> With respect to bringing someone to the meeting; I didn't know who to bring.

Legal Rights

Several parents (29%) said they did not know that they have a legal right to appeal decisions made at the I.P.R.C. meetings. The percentages who did not know vary by cultural group and Special Education program as follows:

	Percentage
Portuguese (N=18)	56%
Chinese (N=12)	50%
English (N=16)	31%
Canadian (N=88)	25%
Other cultural groups (N=61)	25%
West Indian/African (N=13)	23%

	Percentage
Deferred (N=15)	40%
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	33%
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	32%
Other elementary programs (N=29)	31%
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	22%

Additional Comments

Finally, at the end of the interview, parents/guardians were asked to make any additional points they felt had not been covered. These are listed in Table 10 under the headings "positive", "negative" and "neutral". Of the total 280 comments, 59% were negative, 33% positive and 8% neutral.

By Special Education program, parents with children placed in elementary Gifted programs provided the highest average of both positive and negative comments. The data are:

	Average Positive Comments	Average Negative Comments
Elementary Gifted (N=55)	0.53	1.07
Elementary Learning Disability/ Reading Clinic (N=76)	0.45	0.67
Other elementary programs (N=29)	0.45	0.52
Secondary (not Gifted) (N=31)	0.45	0.84
Deferred (N=15)	0.27	0.80

The following are some of the points made by four parents (Vietnamese, Greek, Italian and Canadian) who had children placed in Gifted programs:

> I am very interested in doing what is best for my son. However, I feel frustrated because I do not understand what I should do, or what I could do.
>
> My child is in Grade six, but they used records collected when he was in Grade one and couldn't speak English. It is upsetting. Why is psychological testing done for Gifted programs? Perhaps the testing should be called something else.
>
> The notices about the meetings should come out sooner. Also, the professionals at the meeting should be more sensitive to what the parents have to say.
>
> I felt free to speak, but they used a lot of big words I didn't understand. Also, the school where the Gifted program is located is far away; it is okay if child is bussed, but not okay if TTC must be used.

By cultural group, English and Canadian parents expressed the highest average of both positive and negative comments while Chinese and Portuguese parents expressed the lowest average of both.

	Average Positive Comments	Average Negative Comments
Canadian (N=88)	0.61	1.08
English (N=16)	0.63	0.88
West Indian/African (N=13)	0.23	0.69
Other cultural groups (N=61)	0.43	0.66
Chinese (N=12)	0.00	0.25
Portuguese (N=18)	0.05	0.22

TABLE 10

PARENTS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments	Percentage of Parents (N = 208)
Positive Comments	
Satisfied/Handled well/Pleased/Good job	17%
Program is good/Happy with program	10%
TBE has good system/Special Education programs/ teachers	3%
Pleased that this evaluation is being done	2%
Felt comfortable with process	2%
It was a positive/impressive experience	2%
Committee members were considerate/knew what they were talking about/answered parent	2%
Appreciates program/Parent grateful to Special Education Department	2%
The second I.P.R.C. meeting was better than the first	1%
Supports I.P.R.C. 100%	1%
Satisfied with quick placement of child	1%
Glad that parents can make recommendations for child	1%
I.P.R.C. is a well balanced group	.5%
Professionally done	.5%
People involved with the gifted program are committed	.5%
Good continuity	.5%
Pleased that principal talked to them	.5%
Feel free to speak	.5%
Child is adjusting well to new school	.5%
Has good rapport with teachers	.5%
Negative Comments	
It takes a long time to get a child in a program	10%
Concerned about child going to a different/more distant school	7%
Principals should provide parents with more information before I.P.R.C. meeting	6%
It could be (for others) a very intimidating meeting	4%
Need more information about program before meeting	3%
There should be more communication with parent	3%
Did not know what was going on	3%
There should be more time for discussion at meeting	2%
Need more information on what child will be doing in Special Education program	2%
Reports should be modernized and put in layman's terms	2%

(Continued)

TABLE 10 (Continued)

PARENTS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Negative Comments (Continued)	
Concerned that behavioural class is not under control/ too crowded	2%
Dissatisfied/Not happy	2%
Numbers justify more Special Education classes	2%
Felt bewildered/not respected/not treated fairly	2%
Exceptionality should be more clearly explained	1%
Felt rushed	1%
Child does not like program	1%
Teachers should be able to nominate more children for the programs	1%
Doesn't know anything about results/process	1%
Should inform parents by phone, not letter	1%
Did not get a clear explanation of why child was placed in program	1%
A bad assessment was made	1%
Should be less formal/less intimidating	1%
Children are in the program who should not be there/Some get in too easily	1%
Should be more friendly/comfortable	1%
Children should start doing tests at an earlier age	1%
Withdrawal programs are barely adequate	1%
It is difficult to determine what is most suitable for the child	1%
TBE personnel should encourage child more	.5%
Warning given to child about this program was upsetting	.5%
At first, it was frustrating	.5%
Committee talks above parents' heads	.5%
Didn't have the nerve to complain at the first meeting and didn't attend the second, because felt uncomfortable	.5%
Should be more emphasis on individual testing and less on teacher's report	.5%
Committee has the attitude that parent does not care if unable to attend meeting	.5%
Does not understand what decisions are based on	.5%
Committee members should be more impartial (e.g. principal from another school)	.5%
Special Education programs should be advertised more	.5%
Committee looked at parent's last name and thought she was an immigrant	.5%
Very angry	.5%
Child has a learning problem, not a disability	.5%
Too many people at the meeting	.5%
Had to remind people of the purpose of the meeting	.5%

(Continued)

TABLE 10 (Continued)

PARENTS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Negative Comments (Continued)	
Felt insulted that social worker and psychologist were there for Gifted program	.5%
Concerned with what they call psychological testing for Gifted program	.5%
Used records and data gathered when child could not speak English	.5%
Has been through I.P.R.C. process once before, would have found it difficult to understand otherwise	.5%
Gifted program does not need I.P.R.C. process	.5%
Process is just rubber stamping	.5%
A waste of time	.5%
Such an elaborate process not needed	.5%
Very superficial - they did not know child	.5%
Gifted should not have to be tested to determine success/failure	.5%
Committee should have been aware that child was bilingual	.5%
Special Education programs are underfunded	.5%
For Gifted programs, it is difficult to determine what is suitable for child	.5%
Not all children fit into the Gifted program chart; it is not valid	.5%
The committee is picking the wrong children for the program	.5%
The testing took a long time	.5%
Testing should be done more than once to take child's moods into account	.5%
Difficult to get a clear picture of child's difficulty	.5%
Does not want child in Special Education full time; should mix with other children	.5%
Focussed on child's shyness, not giftedness	.5%
Had assessment done outside, otherwise would still be waiting	.5%
Frustrated because of language problems	.5%
Was not necessary to test again as child was in program at previous school	.5%
Committee used a lot of large words	.5%
Child has no socio-emotional problems; makes friends easily	.5%
Child cannot tolerate environment of school; program placement not appropriate	.5%
Whose mandate is it to take care of environmental issues? I.P.R.C. says it is not their mandate	
Needs of children hypersensitive to the environment are not being met	.5%

(Continued)

TABLE 10 (Continued)

PARENTS' ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments	Percentage of Parents (N = 208) *
Neutral Comments	
Waiting for child to get into program	2%
Curious about the follow-up in 90 days	1%
Would like to observe a class	1%
Committee should not make decisions if parents are not in attendance	1%
TBE is very different from previous board	1%
Problem relates to transferring from one school to another	1%
Last year, the teacher recommended the child; this year, the teacher didn't	1%
Parental pressure can get a child into a program	1%
Parents should get together and have a follow-up	1%
Should be aware of outside sources	1%
Child wants to get into program - will try again	1%
It is the parents' duty to be part of information-sharing	1%
Child made the decision about going into the program	1%
Child lost confidence in the previous school because they didn't understand the problem	1%
Wants to see children fit into the system, not fall between the cracks	.5%
Wants feedback	.5%
Evening meetings would be better	.5%
No additional comments	29%

* This column adds up to over 100%, since many parents gave more than one comment.

Here is a sample of final comments made by six Canadian parents, one Scottish parent and one West Indian parent whose children were placed in Learning Centres, Reading Clinics and Learning Disability programs and who had deferred placements:

> I was very pleased with the meeting and with the school my child is attending. I have spoken to the teachers and principals on numerous occasions, and they have given me a lot of information. I felt involved; they asked me if I agreed with the decisions.
>
> It is a long drawn out process. If I had not had an outside assessment done, I would still be waiting.
>
> I have a good rapport with the teachers, but it is still difficult to get a clear picture of the child's difficulty and the cause of it.
>
> Under Bill 82, each child's needs are to be taken into consideration and met. It was stated a number of times that it was not the mandate of the I.P.R.C. to consider environmental hypersensitivity and its effect on learning. The children's needs are not being met under the present system.
>
> We are pleased with the placement, but it took a long time to do the testing. It started over a year ago.
>
> The first I.P.R.C. meeting was held at an inconvenient time in June and then the case was deferred. We lost a whole year. However, we are now getting good attention, and we are satisfied with the good school.
>
> Testing should be done more thoroughly, as they don't know the children.
>
> I felt my child had a problem in Grade one, but the teacher said it would resolve itself. Now the child is in Grade five and placed in a Learning Disability program.

The lists of positive and negative comments in Table 10 are long, with no one comment expressed by a large proportion of parents. The two most frequently expressed concerns are that it takes a long time to get children into programs and that children will be going to different schools. There is also a desire for more information, particularly before the I.P.R.C. meeting, from principals.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of parental satisfaction or concern with the Identification, Placement and Review process as developed and implemented by the Special Education Department of the Toronto Board of Education.

An attempt was made to interview by telephone all parents/guardians who participated in the process (excluding reviews) during January and February of 1986. Interviews were successfully completed with 208, or 92% of these parents.

These 208 parents reported belonging to a wide range of cultural groups. In addition to the 42% who identified themselves as Canadian, another 30 cultural backgrounds were named. For the purposes of data analysis, the sample was divided into six cultural groups: Canadian (42%), Portuguese (9%), English (8%), West Indian/African (6%), Chinese (6%), and the other 26 cultural backgrounds, identified as "all other groups" in the report, (29%). While criticisms can be made of this division, it did serve to suggest differences in parental attitudes related to cultural background.

The majority (77%) of the children of these parents were placed in elementary Special Education programs. And, again for the purposes of data analysis, the placements were divided into six groups: elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic (37%), elementary Gifted (26%), secondary (not Gifted) (15%), other elementary programs - these are Learning Centre, Behavioural, Special Program, Hearing and Physically Handicapped - (14%), deferred (7%), and not exceptional (1%).

A substantial proportion (34%) of the parents/guardians did not attend the I.P.R.C. meetings, mostly because they had to work. English and Canadian parents were much more likely to attend than West Indian/African and Chinese parents. And, parents whose children were placed in elementary Gifted programs were much more likely to attend than those with children placed in elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic programs.

Broadly speaking, the parents evaluated the Identification, Placement and Review process very positively. Those who attended the I.P.R.C. meetings were likely to say they felt "comfortable" and/or "relaxed" at them and were very likely to describe the discussions as "open", "clear-cut", "professional", "impressive", "informative" and/or "interactive". Many parents spoke highly of the preparation they received before the meetings; they felt "fully informed", "involved with the information-sharing", "fully consulted", "involved with the decision-making", and "understood the purpose of the meetings". Parents had few complaints about the location of the meetings, received written information in a language they could read, understood the papers they had signed and knew they could have interpreters at the meetings. The majority (72%) felt positive about the results of the meetings, frequently saying they were "satisfied" and/or "happy".

However, when the average positive comments per parent were calculated and then analyzed by cultural group, it became obvious that some groups feel much more positive about the Identification, Placement and Review process than others. That is, the English and Canadian parents and parents of "other" [illegible] did Portuguese, Chinese and West Indian/African parents. Differences (of less magnitude) also appeared when the averages were calculated by Special Education program. Parents of children placed in elementary Gifted and Learning Disability/Reading Clinic programs were most positive.

During the Identification, Placement and Review process, every parent/guardian is meant to receive a Toronto Board of Education booklet called "Special Education Guide for Parents and Guardians" in a language they can read. However, 54% of these parents did not, and it was mostly a case of not receiving it at all. Particularly high proportions of the West Indian/African, Chinese and Portuguese parents did not receive it and/or did not receive it in a language they could read. Analyzed by program, parents whose children were placed in elementary Gifted programs were most likely to receive the booklet.

Parents can take anyone of their choice to I.P.R.C. meetings for assistance; unfortunately, 56% of these parents reported that they were unaware of this. Proportionately, Chinese parents were least aware, while Portuguese parents were most aware. Analyzed by program, parents whose children's placements were deferred and parents whose children were placed in secondary (not Gifted) programs were least likely to be aware.

Notwithstanding the high proportion of positive responses and feelings, it is informative to examine the concerns and negative feelings of the parents, as these can be the basis for making improvements in the Identification, Placement and Review process. On average, the Canadian, West Indian/African and Portuguese parents expressed more concerns and negative feelings than the other cultural groups. And, when analyzed by program, it seems that parents with children placed in secondary (not Gifted) programs and parents with children whose placements were deferred expressed the highest averages of negative feelings.

Considering the responses across all the questions, the area of widest concern is that of "poor parent preparation and inadequate information". This relates to not receiving the booklet (as discussed above); not understanding the makeup, purpose and role of the Committee; being confused during the discussion at the meeting; not being clear about the child's exceptionality and the nature of the Special Education program; and, not being aware of the results of the Committee meeting.

A second concern is that of "having to wait". Several parents felt that the process was drawn out; that is, testing took too long, exceptionalities were not identified early enough, placements did not occur soon enough, deferrals were recommended and letters of appeal were not answered promptly.

Thirdly, some parents were surprised and/or worried that their child would be attending the Special Education program in a different school.

A fourth area of concern centered on the structure, characteristics and procedures of the Committee. This meant that for some parents the Committee was too large; that the Committee was made up of some unnecessary people; that an air of professionalism and authority prevailed over knowing the child and using up-to-date and thorough information and test results; that the opinions of a particular member held too much weight; and/or that the procedures were too elaborate, formal and traditional.

Fifth, some parents expressed a feeling of alienation from the information-sharing and decision-making before, during and/or after the meeting. They may have said they felt left out, cut off, and/or ignored. They may have preferred telephone calls to letters. They may have found meeting times inappropriate and inflexible. And, they may have felt the Committee members had made up their minds before the meeting and that parent participation was irrelevant.

And, finally, a sixth group of negative comments when collected together reveal that several parents/guardians did not feel relaxed and comfortable at the I.P.R.C. meetings. Feelings such as tension, intimidation and apprehension were among those expressed.

As has been pointed out several times in the report, satisfactions and concerns expressed by the parents/guardians vary by cultural group and Special Education program. However, it is of further interest to note that these two divisions of the parents are confounded as percentages of children in the six Special Education programs vary with the six cultural groups. Four trends in the data are:

(1) Canadian and West Indian/African parents have the highest percentages of children in elementary Learning Disability/Reading Clinic programs;
(2) Portuguese, West Indian/African and Chinese parents have the lowest percentages of children in elementary Gifted programs;
(3) Portuguese and Chinese parents have the highest percentages of children in secondary (not Gifted) programs; and
(4) West Indian/African parents have the highest percentage of children in other elementary programs.

In closing, the study provides good evidence that the Identification, Placement and Review process is highly effective in meeting the needs of most parents. It has also identified some areas where there is potential for growth in the implementation of the process and some groups of parents and pupils that might benefit from such growth. The sample can be considered to be representative of all such parents for the school year 1985-86.

APPENDIX A

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Toronto Board

of

Education

SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Guide for Parents and Guardians

Revised September 1985

A General Guide to Special Education

The following handbook was prepared to act as a guide for parents and guardians in assessing the Special Educational needs of their children.

This guide describes Special Education services available in the Board of Education for the City of Toronto. We hope that you as a parent or guardian will feel free to call or visit your child's school and talk with the teacher and principal about your child's progress. We believe that good communication between home and school can really help your child get the most out of school.

In the course of their school years, some children may require a Special Education placement. For this reason, the Toronto Board of Education offers a wide range of such services. We have found that most children do best if they stay in a regular grade class. If necessary, the classroom teacher will make suitable changes to your child's program there. Some students may benefit in a part-time class with a specially trained teacher (withdrawal class). A smaller number of students need the extra help that can be given in a full time Special Education class (self-contained class).

The range of our Board's Special Education services for exceptional students living in the City of Toronto is as follows:

In Elementary Schools

Withdrawal Classes (part-time)	Self-Contained Classes (full-time)
Behavioural	Behavioural
Learning Disabilities	Learning Disabilities
Reading Clinic	Reading
Gifted	Primary, Junior & Senior*
Home Instruction	Health
Speech	Gifted
Learning Centres	

In Secondary Schools

Withdrawal Classes (part-time)	Self-Contained Classes (full-time)
Behavioural (Resource Room)	Secondary* Behavioural (Partial Rotary)**
Learning Disabilities (Resource Room)	Learning Disabilities (Partial Rotary)**

* Special Education (Primary, Junior, Senior and Secondary) is designed for educable retarded students who can still benefit from classroom instruction in a regular school. Services for more severely retarded students are offered in special schools operated by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board.

** This is a full time program in which more than one teacher is involved.

You may be reading this because your child is being considered for some form of Special Education help. If that is the case, we think it is important for you to know how the final decision will be made, what the different steps are and above all what your rights are as the parent or guardian of a pupil being considered for this help.

Special Education and the Amended Education Act, 1980 (Bill 82)

The amended Education Act (as of 1980) legally requires every school board in Ontario to provide appropriate Special Education services for its exceptional pupils. As of September, 1985, these services must be in place for all children who require them. The Act and its accompanying Regulations have laid down the procedures a board must follow to identify exceptional pupils. In these procedures, parents have the right to be actively involved in the decision-making process.

The Exceptional Child

The "exceptional child" is now defined by law. There is a broad range of "exceptionalities". The child may have difficulty in using language; a physical handicap; an emotional or behavioural problem; intellectual or learning difficulties; or may be gifted.

Before your child is considered to be an "exceptional pupil" under the law, a decision must be made by a committee called an IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC). You as parent or guardian will be invited to attend and actively take part in the meeting of the IPRC.

Special Education

What Is Meant By Special Education?

The term "Special Education" covers all services designed for "exceptional children". The services are worked out on the basis of various tests and reports conducted for the individual child. Once a child has been given a Special Education placement, frequent testing and close observation will help the teacher to make any educational changes which are needed to ensure that the child continues to make good progress.

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Referral Procedures

Step One:
The first step in having your child considered for Special Education help can be made by the classroom teacher, or by the principal or by other staff members of the school

When this possibility is being considered, it is the responsibility of the principal and teacher to tell you of any concerns they may have and to let you know what measures have been taken in the regular grade class to overcome the educational difficulties that your child is experiencing

Step Two:
Before any further action is taken, you will be asked to give written permission for a psychological assessment of your child

If this should occur, you will be invited to meet the principal to discuss your child's educational needs. At that time you will be asked to sign a Parental Permission for Psychological Assessment form. The information gathered in this assessment could include aspects of your child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. All information will be treated in a confidential manner. Parents of children who are being considered for a gifted placement will be asked if they wish to have a group test given to their child. In addition to a psychological assessment or group test, your child's progress in school will be reviewed by the teacher and/or the principal

Step Three:
Assessment Conference

When the assessment is complete, the appropriate staff people will discuss their findings and decide whether to proceed further. If Special Education help seems to be needed, the school principal will refer your child's case to an IPRC meeting for a decision on placement. The principal will write to you to confirm this referral. As well, as the parent or guardian, YOU can request an IPRC through the school principal at any time if you have concerns about your child's progress at school

Step Four:
Placement Meeting

You will be invited to attend the IPRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee) by a letter from the principal and will be required to send back a written reply indicating whether or not you will attend. You may also bring to the IPRC meeting anyone who might assist you in presenting your information or in understanding the proceedings. Your child's teacher and the school principal will also attend the meeting

In this meeting, you have the right to make your views known and ask questions

The Committee has the powers and duties to

(i) decide whether or not your child is exceptional
(ii) decide what kind of Special Education service, if any, is best suited to the exceptional needs of your child
(iii) decide whether more information is needed (e.g. of a psychiatric or medical nature),
(iv) interview your child, if appropriate (but only with your permission),
(v) confirm its decisions with you, in writing

A pupil will not be placed in any Special Education class without the parent's or guardian's written consent, unless the parent has both refused consent and failed to appeal the decision. If you do not agree with the decision of the IPRC, you have the right to appeal. See Step Six

Step Five:
Regular Review of your child's progress

Throughout the year, both the teacher and the school principal will be reviewing your child's placement. You will be invited to meetings to go over your child's progress. No major changes can be made in your child's Special Education placement without your written permission. At least once every twelve months, your child's placement must be reviewed by an IPRC. You will be invited to that meeting, just as in Step Four. At the review meeting, it may be recommended that your child

(i) remain in the present Special Education class, or
(ii) be referred to an IPRC for consideration of placement in another type of Special Education class, or
(iii) be returned to full-time regular education

As a parent or guardian, you may apply to have the placement reconsidered as early as 3 months after your child has been given a Special Education placement

Step Six:
The right to appeal against Special Education decisions

As a parent or guardian, you have the legal right to appeal against any of the following decisions of an IPRC

(i) the decision that your child is an "exceptional child", or the decision that your child is not an "exceptional child", as defined by law,
(ii) the choice of placement made for your child should Special Education help be recommended

You may refuse to grant permission to have your child placed in Special Education. In this case, you must appeal to the Director of Education in writing. If no appeal is received within 15 days, the Board has the right to place your child in the recommended Special Education class and notify you of the action that has been taken

(iii) a change of placement, if after a proper review, such a change is recommended

If you refuse a change of placement, you must again appeal to the Director of Education in writing. If no appeal is received within 15 days of being told of the IPRC decision, the Board has the right to make the change which was recommended and notify you of the action that has been taken

Some Questions and Answers

Q. What information will the IPRC need?

A. *The committee requires a complete educational assessment of your child. The members may require a psychological assessment, which may be completed only with your written permission. You also may be asked to give permission for an updated health assessment or social/medical history*

Q. Who does the psychological assessment?

A. *Psychological assessments are administered by the Psychoeducational Consultants of the Toronto Board of Education at no cost to you. You may have additional assessments done by other professionals at your own expense. Board policy gives parent(s) and guardian(s) the right to know the qualifications of those who make psychological assessments, or who prepare any reports which are not of an academic nature*

Q. Can I help in the psychological assessment?

A. *First you can help your child to understand why the assessment is being carried out. Then you can help the Psychoeducational Consultant by answering questions about the child's school history, development and health. You have the right to know the results of any assessment, and to discuss them with this consultant*

Q. Who attends the IPRC meetings?

A. *The committee has a minimum of three members from the Board of Education - a Special Education supervisory officer or designate, a principal, and a senior psychologist. Any other Board staff who have been involved directly with your child, such as the teacher or the principal or the psychoeducational consultant, are also invited to participate in the meeting. You as parent or guardian of the child are also invited to participate*

Q. If I need an interpreter, would one be available?

A. *Yes. The Board of Education will provide an interpreter if you would like to have one, or you may bring a friend*

Q. What happens if I don't agree with the decisions of the IPRC?

A. *If you disagree with the IPRC's decision that your child is (or is not) an exceptional pupil, or with the recommended placement of your child, you have the right to appeal in writing to the Director of Education within 15 days of the IPRC decision*

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Within 30 days of receiving this letter the Board will appoint an independent committee to re examine your child's placement, and respond with its considerations. During an Appeal a child would remain in his/her present class until the results of the appeal are finalized.

Q. If my child is attending a school which is far from home, is transportation provided free of charge?

A. *Yes. The Toronto Board of Education provides transportation for students attending Special Education classes away from their community school.*

Q. Can I withdraw my child from Special Education?

A. *Yes. However, we recommend that you discuss withdrawal from Special Education with the principal of your child's school. The principal then requests that the Identification, Placement and Review Committee discuss the situation and make recommendations. If you are still dissatisfied, you may appeal in writing to the Director of Education.*

Q. What will happen if my child has severe problems for which there are no services available at the Toronto Board of Education?

A. *For children with severe physical handicaps, impaired hearing and eyesight and severe mental retardation, there are special schools in Metropolitan Toronto for which placement may be considered. Other educational services are available to you in various Hospitals and other institutions in Toronto. If placement in a residential school is necessary, provision will be made for your child in a Provincial School. In all such cases, the Toronto Board will make the appropriate referral.*

Q. Where can I obtain more information?

A. *Please contact the principal of your local school or the Special Education Department (598-4931).*

Parent's Rights

The following rights for parents of children being considered for Special Education placement were adopted as Board policy on the recommendation of the Workgroup on Learning Disabilities. Parents have the right:

(i) to be informed of any reading assessment conducted with their children (since this is an academic evaluation, no formal permission is required);

(ii) to grant or withhold permission for any psychological assessment or group test conducted by the Board, or any Special Education placement or program change;

(iii) to receive copies of all assessment reports and to have them explained in an interview with the person who conducted the assessment;

(iv) to be informed of the identity and qualifications of anyone conducting an assessment of their child;

(v) to receive regular reports from any teacher of their child in a withdrawal program or a self-contained class;

(vi) to be routinely informed of program modifications designed for their child in a regular classroom;

(vii) to request a review of any Special Education placement.

Note:
The information contained in this pamphlet is intended to serve as a guide for parents in respect to their rights as they relate to the possible participation of their children in Special Education. This is not a definitive and legal statement of such rights.

APPENDIX B

GIFTED RESOURCE CENTRES:

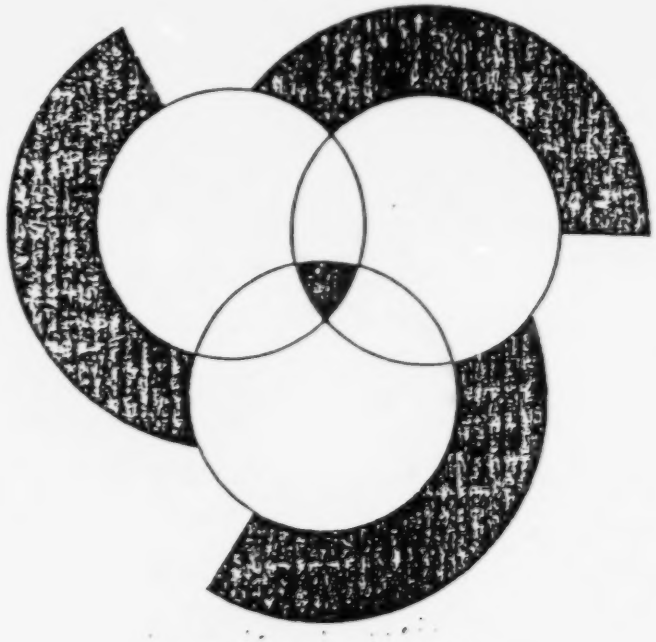
A BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

A Booklet for Parents

Gifted Resource Centres

A New Program for Gifted Students
Elementary Grades

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION / 1984



A Booklet for Parents

Gifted Resource Centres

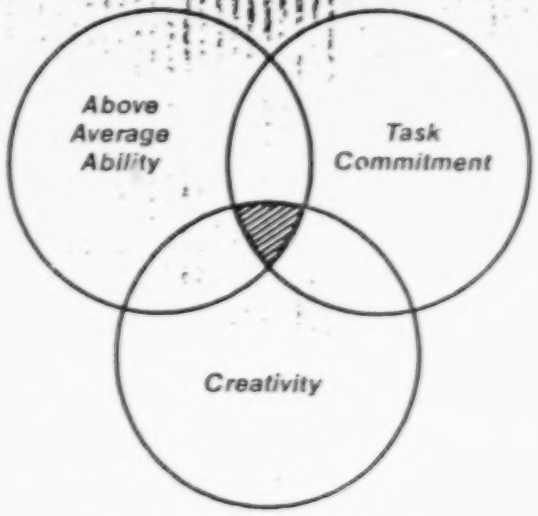
September 1984 —
Nomination process begins
for elementary grade pupils

December 1984 —
I.P.R.C. meetings begin

September 1985 —
Part-Time Program and
Full-Time Program begin at
Gifted Resource Centres

Beginning in September 1985, the Toronto Board of Education will offer special programs designed to meet the needs of elementary grade gifted pupils at Gifted Resource Centres throughout the city.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has defined giftedness as follows:
"An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of education potential indicated."
In addition, the Toronto Board of Education in interpreting this definition includes *unusual creativity and commitment to the task in hand* as indications of giftedness.



The shaded area in the centre represents gifted behaviour.

The programs, to commence September 1985, will accommodate the diverse educational needs of pupils who are identified as gifted.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE GIFTED CHILD

Giftedness is present in persons of all cultures, languages, classes, and circumstances; male and female.

The process of identification of giftedness must be rigorously fair and sufficiently flexible to ensure that all who merit admittance to a special program are included in it.

Throughout *this* school year a concerted effort will be made to find and identify every gifted child in the Toronto school system. In-service training will be given to teachers to assist them in recognizing signs of giftedness in children, and to explain the process of identification established by the Toronto Board.

A child may exhibit unusual ability *at home* through work activities, hobbies, conversation and discussion, reading habits, and in many other ways. If you believe you have a child who may be gifted you may bring this to the attention of the principal by filling out a nomination form at the child's school.

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THE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

1 Nomination

A pupil may be nominated for the gifted program by parents, guardians, former or present teachers, any other person who knows the pupil well, or by the pupil personally.

Nomination forms are available at the school office, Area Offices, and at the Special Education Department at the Education Centre.

2 Parent Involvement

No action is taken on a nomination until the child's parent or guardian is informed and asked to give written permission for the gathering of additional information about the child's interests, abilities, creativity, and desire to learn.

This information will be sought from a variety of sources — parents, teachers, the pupil, and others if appropriate.

3 Assessment

Group assessments of all nominated pupils (whose parents wish to have an assessment) will be conducted in the pupil's own school. Occasionally, it may be helpful to conduct an individual psychological assessment of some pupils.

All information gathered will be treated in a confidential manner.

4 Formal Identification

All this information is considered by a committee of professionals called an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.). This committee decides when the pupil is an "exceptional child" under The Education Act. A child who is declared to be exceptional is eligible for a special program.

It is the responsibility of the school principal to forward the pupil's nomination to the I.P.R.C.

The nominated pupil's parent or guardian is invited to attend and take an active part in the I.P.R.C. meeting.

If the I.P.R.C. determines that the child is exceptional and that the exceptionality is *giftedness*, three program choices become available to the parent and pupil.

5 Program Options

The pupil may continue in the regular classroom program with appropriate assistance;

OR

The pupil may attend a Part-Time Program at a Gifted Resource Centre one day per week;

OR

The pupil may attend a Full-Time Program at a Gifted Resource Centre.

GIFTED RESOURCE CENTRE - PART-TIME PROGRAM

For the majority of pupils, it is believed that attendance in the Part-Time Program will be most appropriate as it will allow the pupils to maintain identity with their local school while still receiving a gifted program.

Pupils spend *one day per week* at the Gifted Resource Centre and *four days per week* attending regular class in their home school.

In the home school, the regular class curriculum is compressed in order to free time for the pupil's participation in Gifted Resource Centre studies. The pupil remains responsible for mastering the regular classroom curriculum, but not necessarily for the completion of every activity within each study unit. Curriculum units can be studied in a shorter period of time or omitted entirely if the pupil can demonstrate high competence or a mastery of the required skills.

In the Part-Time Program at the Gifted Resource Centre, pupils

work individually or in small groups on research into problems and issues. They are encouraged to take part in selecting the topics for investigation and in proposing suitable techniques of research. The pupil functions as a producer as well as a consumer of information and ideas. The results of each investigation are presented by the pupil or group of pupils to classmates or to other interested persons.

Students attending the Part-Time Program will be provided with school bus transportation from their local school to the Gifted Resource Centre and back to the local school.

GIFTED RESOURCE CENTRE – FULL-TIME PROGRAM

The Full-Time Program will be appropriate for a smaller number of students. They will be required to leave their community schools in order to attend.

Pupils attend class at the Gifted Resource Centre on a full-time basis, *five days per week*. In addition to the specially qualified teachers on the staff, other instructors, selected for their particular knowledge or skills, may be invited to work with the pupils from time to time.

The curriculum follows the guidelines prescribed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. This material is covered at an accelerated pace and at a greater depth than in regular classes. The teaching methods used are more appropriate to the abilities, needs and interests of these pupils. They have opportunities to work with a wide range of people and materials.

Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the selection of topics to be studied and to propose suitable techniques of investigation. The pupil functions as a producer as well as a consumer of information and ideas. The results of each research project are presented by the pupil or pupil group to classmates or to other interested persons.

Pupils in the Full-Time Program may require transportation. Junior school pupils will be encouraged to use T.T.C. and tickets will be provided. Where necessary, door-to-door school bus transportation will be provided. Parents wishing this residence-to-school transportation may make application through their school principal. Students in senior school will be required to use T.T.C. Tickets will be provided.

The Gifted Resource Centre Programs described above will be provided *in addition to* the Enrichment Programs developed by individual elementary schools across the city for bright and gifted pupils.

THE GIFTED RESOURCE CENTRE

Location:

Gifted Resource Centres will be established in all areas of the city. Specific sites will be selected to make travelling to and from the Centre as easy as possible for the pupil.

Staff:

All teachers in the Gifted Resource Centres are experienced classroom teachers with additional Special Education qualifications as required by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Toronto Board of Education.

They are aware of the characteristics and needs of gifted pupils, and they understand how teaching techniques can be modified to provide learning opportunities and experiences which are appropriate.

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NOTES:

For further information, please contact one of the following people:

David Henshaw, Co-ordinator
Gifted and Enrichment
Special Education Department
Toronto Board of Education
Telephone: 591-8005

Area Central — Wards 4, 6
Ken MacLennan,
Assistant Co-ordinator
Telephone: 368-2676

Area East — Wards 7, 8, 9
Carolynn Whiteley, Consultant
Telephone: 461-6371

Area North — Wards 5, 10, 11
Dave Appleyard, Consultant
Telephone: 485-9143

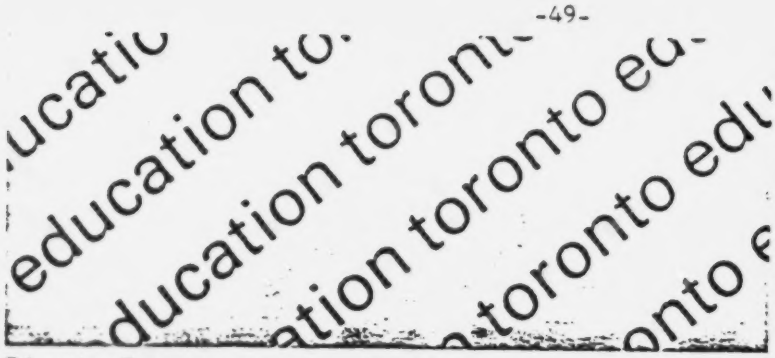
Area West — Wards 1, 2, 3
Klara Hada, Consultant
Telephone: 534-6365

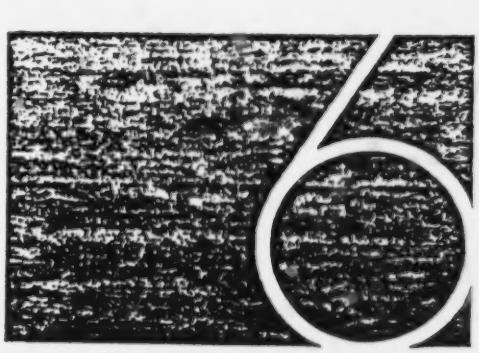
This booklet is also available in French, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Extra copies are available from
Information & Publications
Toronto Board of Education
155 College Street
Toronto M5T 1P6
Telephone 591-8259

APPENDIX C

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL EDUCATION FACT SHEET





Education Toronto — one of a series of fact sheets on the school system operated by the Toronto Board of Education

February 1983

Special Education

Special Education involves a wide variety of teaching programs designed for "exceptional" students attending Toronto elementary and secondary schools.

These programs consist of self-contained classes, resource and learning centres, and individual or group instruction on a withdrawal or itinerant basis. All programs are open-ended and the progress of every student is evaluated at regular intervals to ensure that his or her needs are being met.

INTEGRATION

The philosophy of the Special Education Department is to integrate students into regular programs, wherever feasible. Integration is usually a gradual process as the student becomes less dependent on special education support and learns to cope successfully in a regular classroom. There are, however, students whose physical, emotional and intellectual needs are such that they cannot learn effectively in a regular class and require the support of a self-contained class.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Special Education class size depends on the type of program. Emphasis is on an individual program which allows the student to work at an appropriate level and pace. While academic work must be challenging, it must also be within the student's capabilities.

ITINERANT TEACHERS

Special Education itinerant teachers are available to assist classroom teachers of students with educational problems in the areas of vision, hearing, speech, behaviour, and language and learning disabilities.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Three special schools provide learning situations in which children who are unable to benefit fully from a regular school environment can develop to their potential. They are: Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf (for the hearing impaired); and Sunny View School and Bloorview School (for the physically and orthopaedically handicapped).

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Special Education teachers have appropriate qualifications in their specialities, successful teaching experience in grade classes, an objective viewpoint, an optimistic outlook — plus much understanding.

These teachers are encouraged to continue their professional development through participation in further education and in-service programs in order to better meet the needs of exceptional children.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

Two supervisory officers in Special Education administer a consultative staff of 26 who work directly with approximately 636 Special Education teachers and 355 non-teaching personnel in the Toronto Board's various programs and classes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION

To assist parents and guardians in understanding the Special Education programs available in Toronto Board schools and the placement of students in these programs, the pamphlet *Special Education — A Guide for Parents and Guardians* is available from your local school or the Special Education Department, 598-4931, extension 673.

This pamphlet is produced in the following languages:

English	French	Chinese
Greek	Italian	Polish
Portuguese	Spanish	Vietnamese

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Telephone (416) 598-4931

- Michael Choma, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Program (Special Education) extension 672
- Magil M. Darnley, Supervisory Officer, Special Education, extension 671

Address

- Toronto Board of Education, 155 College St., Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1P6

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS — As of January 1, 1983

Type of Program	Placement Criteria	Location	Number of Teachers
S.E. (BEHAVIOURAL)	A learning disorder characterized by specific behavioural/emotional problems.	In the Elementary Schools Itinerant Teacher Program In the Secondary Schools	10 2.5 6
*S.E. (DEAF) (Parent Guidance Program from time of diagnosis)	Profoundly deaf (program is available from age 3).	Metro School for the Deaf Forest Hill P.S. In the Secondary Schools	20 1 14
S.E. (GIFTED AND ENRICHMENT)	Outstanding general abilities combined with the capability of intense concentration and creativity.	In the Elementary Schools In the Secondary Schools *Beginning in 1983, a three-year phase-in program* Saturday Morning Classes 4 city-wide locations	 40 Instructors
S.E. (HEALTH)	Severe health limitations.	Charles G. Fraser, Fairmount, Osler, & Wilkinson Public School	7
*S.E. (HEARING)	Hearing impaired (program is available from age 4).	In the Elementary Schools Itinerant Teacher Program In the Secondary Schools	3 14 7
S.E. (HOME INSTRUCTION)	Severe health, physical, emotional, and/or behavioural problems.	In the home or Elementary School	As Required
** S.E. (HOSPITAL & INSTITUTIONAL)	Severe emotional, behavioural, medical and/or physical problems.	In various Hospitals & Institutions – Elementary – Secondary	 56.6 25.5
* S.E. (LANGUAGE)	Severe language disorders.	In the Elementary Schools Itinerant Teacher Program In the Secondary Schools	15 1 2
S.E. (LEARNING CENTRE)	Moderate to mild difficulty in the behavioural, learning disability, or slow intellectual development areas	Withdrawal Program In the Public Schools	100.5
S.E. (LEARNING DISABILITIES)	Significant discrepancies between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability evidenced by learning disabilities in academic and social areas that involve the use of language and mathematics.	In the Elementary Schools Itinerant Teacher Program In the Secondary Schools	83 7.5 50.5
*S.E. (ORTHOPAEDIC)	Severe physical handicap requiring special services and setting	Sunny View School In the Secondary Schools	40 4.5
S.E. (PRIMARY), (JUNIOR), (SENIOR)	A learning disorder characterized by slow intellectual development.	Junior Public Schools Senior Public Schools	32 29
S.E. (PRIMARY), (JR.), (SR.) CORE WITHDRAWAL	A learning disorder characterized by slow intellectual development.	Withdrawal Program In the Public Schools	 11
S.E. (READING)	A learning disorder characterized by a Primary Reading Disability.	In the Public Schools	5
S.E. (READING CLINIC)	A learning disorder primarily characterized by a Reading Disability	Withdrawal Program In Reading Clinics	 32
S.E. (SECONDARY)	A learning disorder characterized by slow intellectual development	In the Secondary School	3
S.E. (SPEECH)	Speech and language difficulties (impaired in articulation, rhythm and stress)	In the Public and Secondary Schools	15.5

S.E. – Special Education – * Metro-wide attendance; programs operated by Toronto Board of Education
** Ministry Funded (Section 15, Grant Regulations)

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APPENDIX D

PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS

FLOW CHART

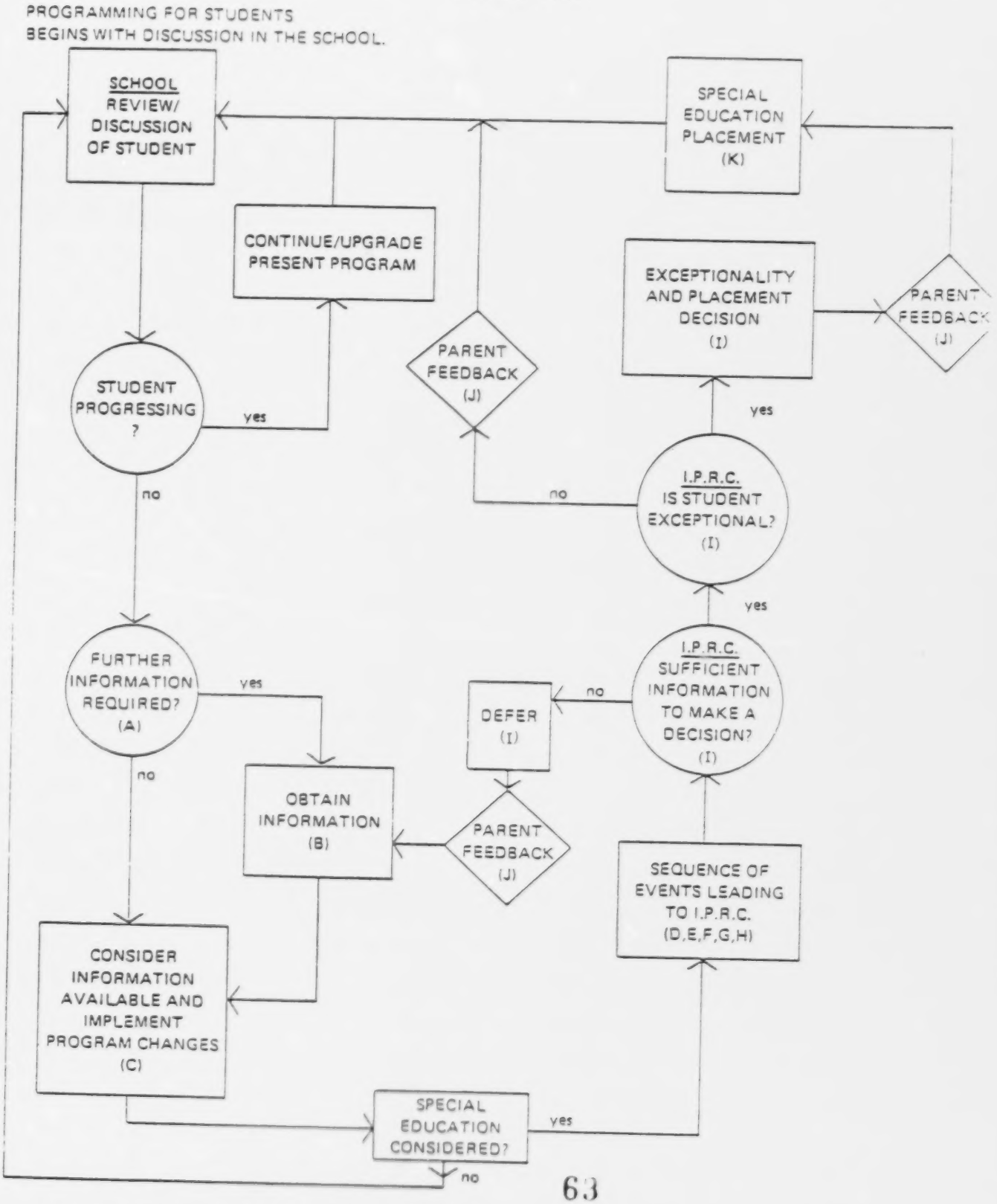
FROM

IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

PRINCIPAL's HANDBOOK

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS
FLOW CHART



NOTE: LETTERS IN BRACKETS REFER TO STEPS OUTLINED IN THE PROCESS ON PAGE 4.

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE:

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

PARENTS' OPINIONS

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

PARENTS' OPINIONS

FEBRUARY/MARCH
1986

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. Did you attend the I.P.R.C. meeting?

   Yes (go to 2)

   No (go to 4)

2. How did you feel at the I.P.R.C. meeting?
   (The following may be used as probes.)

   Comfortable Respected Intimidated

   Upset Ignored Relaxed Rushed

   Involved Frightened Confused

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. How would you describe the discussion at the I.P.R.C. meeting?
   (The following may be used as probes.)

   Confusing Informative Objective

   Clear-cut Too academic No interpreter

   Poor Tense Open One-way Satisfying

   Compassionate Interactive Excellent

   Poor interpretation Good answers to my questions Professional

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

(go to 5)

4. **Why were you <u>unable to attend</u> the I.P.R.C. meeting?**
(The following may be used as probes.)

Poor location	On holiday	No babysitter
Poor time	Sickness	Had to work
Poor date	Physical disability	Language problems
Uncomfortable	No transportation	Business reasons

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. **How do you feel about the <u>results</u> of the I.P.R.C. meeting?**
(The following may be used as probes.)

Satisfied	Resigned	Relieved
Angry	Happy	Concerned
Excited	Confused	Proud
Racially discriminated against	Disappointed	Impressed

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. How were you prepared before the I.P.R.C. meeting?
(The following may be used as probes.)

Fully informed	Intimidated	Involved in decision-making
Confused	Inconvenienced	Involved in information-sharing
Understood purpose of meeting	Fully consulted	

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What do you think about the location of the I.P.R.C. meeting?

Excellent	Hard to find	Too far away
Convenient	O.K.	

8. Have you received written information in a language you can read?

Yes No

9. Have you understood the papers you have signed?

Yes No

10. Did you know you could have an interpreter at the I.P.R.C. meeting?

Yes No

11. Did you receive the booklet called "Special Education Guide for Parents and Guardians" in a language you could read?

Yes No

12. Did you know you could bring anyone of your choice to the I.P.R.C. meeting to assist you?

Yes No

13. Do you know that you have a legal right to appeal decisions made at the I.P.R.C. meeting?

Yes No

14. To what cultural group do you belong? (For example: Chinese, French, Native Indian, Portuguese.)

_____

15. Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for

your

cooperation.

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PARENTS

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO
155 College Street, Toronto M5T 1P6, Canada, 598-4931

International Year of Peace 1986
Année internationale de la paix 1986

February 28, 1986

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Toronto Board of Education is conducting a survey on parents' satisfaction with the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.) procedures initiated by the Special Education Department.

During the month of March, Martha Power, Research Department, will contact you by telephone to ask some questions on the process that was followed for the identification of your child.

Your involvement in this survey will assist us in maintaining the best possible service for you and your child. Your co-operation in this matter is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

M. Choma

Michael Choma
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Program
(Special Education)

GSD:cf

Edward N. McKeown, Director of Education/Ronald W. Halford, Associate Director — Operations/Donald C. Rutledge, Associate Director — Program
Charles W. Taylor, Superintendent of Curriculum and Program/Linda Grayson, Superintendent of Information Services
Helen I. Sissons, Superintendent of Personnel/Michael J. Rose, Comptroller of Buildings and Plant/David S. Paton, Comptroller of Finance